

DYNAMIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION IN PACKET DATA TRANSFER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 Field of the Invention

This invention relates to multiple access communication systems and in particular it relates to dynamic resource allocation in time division multiple access systems.

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Description of Related Art

In Multiple access wireless systems such as GSM, a number of mobile stations communicate with a network. The allocation of physical communication channels for use by the mobile stations is fixed. A description of the GSM system may be found in The GSM System for Mobile Communications by M. Mouly and M. B. Pautet, published 1992 with the ISBN reference 2-9507190-0-7.

With the advent of packet data communications over Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA) systems, more flexibility is required in the allocation of resources and in particular in the use of physical communication channels. For packet data transmissions in General Packet Radio Systems (GPRS) a number of Packet Data CHannels (PDCH) provide the physical communication links. The time division is by frames of 4.615 ms duration and each frame has eight consecutive 0.577 ms slots. A description of the

GPRS system may be found in (GSM 03.64 V 8.5 release 1999). The slots may be used for uplink or downlink communication. Uplink communication is a transmission from the mobile station for reception by the network to which it is attached. Reception by the mobile station of a transmission from the network is described as downlink.

In order to utilise most effectively the available bandwidth, access to channels can be allocated in response to changes in channel conditions, traffic loading Quality of service and subscription class. Owing to the continually changing channel conditions and traffic loadings a method for dynamic allocation of the available channels is available.

The amounts of time that the mobile station receives downlink or transmits uplink may be varied and slots allocated accordingly. The sequences of slots allocated for reception and transmission, the so-called multislot pattern is usually described in the form RXY. The allocated receive (R) slots being the number X and the allocated transmit slots (T) the number Y.

A number of multislot classes, one through to 29, is defined for GPRS operation and the maximum uplink (Tx) and downlink (Rx) slot allocations are specified for each class. The specification for multislot class 12 is shown in Table 1 below.

In a GPRS system, access to a shared channel is controlled by means of an Uplink Status Flag (USF)

transmitted on the downlink to each communicating mobile station (MS). In GPRS two allocation methods are defined, which differ in the convention about which uplink slots are made available on receipt of a USF. The present invention 5 relates to a particular allocation method, in which an equal number "N" of PDCH's, where a "PDCH" uses a pair of uplink and downlink slots corresponding to each other on a 1-1 basis, are allocated for potential use by the MS. The uplink slots available for actual use by a particular 10 mobile station sharing the uplink channel are indicated in the USF. The USF is a data item capable of taking 8 values V0- V7, and allows uplink resources to be allocated amongst up to 8 mobiles where each mobile recognises one of these 8 values as 'valid', i.e. conferring exclusive use of 15 resources to that mobile. In the case of the extended dynamic allocation method, for example, reception of a valid USF in the slot 2 of the present frame will indicate the actual availability for transmission of transmit slots 2...N in the next TDMA frame or group of frames, where N is 20 the number of allocated PDCHs. Generally for a valid USF received at receiver slot n, transmission takes place in the next transmit frame at transmit slots n, n+1 et seq. to the allocated number of slots (N). For the extended dynamic allocation method as presently defined these 25 allocated slots are always consecutive.

The mobile station is not able instantly to switch from a receive condition to a transmit condition or vice

versa and the time allocated to these reconfigurations is known as turnaround time. As presently defined the turnaround time depends upon the class of mobile. A turnaround time of one slot is allocated in the case of 5 class 12 mobiles such as are used for the exemplary embodiment. It is also necessary for the mobile station, whilst in packet transfer mode, to perform neighbourhood cell measurements. The mobile station has continuously to monitor all Broadcast Control Channel (BCCH) carriers as 10 indicated by the BA(GPRS) list and the BCCH carrier of the serving cell. A received signal level measurement sample is taken in every TDMA frame, on at least one of the BCCH carriers. (GSM 05.08 10.1.1.2)

These neighbour cell measurements are taken prior to 15 re-configuration from reception to transmission or prior to re-configuration from transmission to reception. The number of slots allocated to each of these measurements and re-configurations for multislot class 12 is two.

Arising from the requirement to allocate particular 20 slots for turnaround and measurement purposes, some restrictions occur and potential dynamic channel allocations are lost. These restrictions reduce the availability of slots for uplink transmissions; reduce the flow of data and reduce the flexibility of response to 25 changing conditions.

An exhaustive technical review and wholesale change to the existing prescribed operating conditions might be

expected to alleviate the problems associated with dynamic allocation. Whilst this is possible, the considerable difficulties caused by such wholesale change would be generally unwelcome and this resolution of the technical
5 problem is unlikely.

There is a need therefore to provide a solution to the problems affecting dynamic channel allocation with minimal effect on existing prior art methods.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of this invention to reduce the restrictions affecting dynamic channel allocation with minimal effect on the existing prescript.

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In accordance with the invention there is provided a method for controlling packet data transmissions as set out in the attached claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

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An embodiment of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying figures in which:

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Figure 1 illustrates the GPRS TDMA frame structure showing the numbering convention used for uplink and downlink timeslots;

Figure 2 illustrates a 3 slot allocation and a state transition from R3T0 to R3T2;

Figures 3 to 6 show 2 PDCH extended dynamic allocations in steady state for R2T0, R2T1 and R2T2 respectively with associated measurement and turnaround intervals;

5 Figure 6 is a state transition diagram for 2 PDCH extended dynamic allocations;

Figures 7 to 11 show the state transitions of figure 6;

10 Figure 12 to 15 show the 3 PDCH extended dynamic allocation in steady state;

Figure 16 is a state transition diagram for 3 PDCH extended dynamic allocation;

Figures 17 to 25 show the state transitions of figure 16;

15 Figures 26 to 30 show the steady state 4 slot extended dynamic allocation of the prior art;

Figures 31 to 35 show the steady state 4 slot extended dynamic allocation in accordance with the invention;

20 Figure 36 is a state transition diagram for 4 slot extended dynamic allocation in accordance with the invention; and

Figures 37 to 50 show the state transitions of figure 36.

In this embodiment, the invention is applied to a GPRS wireless network operating in accordance with the standards applicable to multislot class 12.

In figure 1 the GPRS TDMA frame structure is illustrated and shows the numbering convention used for uplink and downlink timeslots. It should be noted that in practice Tx may be advanced relative to Rx due to timing advance, although this is not shown in the illustration. Thus in practice the amount of time between the first Rx and first Tx of a frame may be reduced a fraction of a slot from the illustrated value of 3 slots due to timing advance. Two successive TDMA frames are illustrated with receiver (Rx) and transmitter (Tx) slots identified separately. The slot positions within the first frame are shown by the numerals 1 through to 8 with the transmission and reception slots offset by a margin of three slots. This is in accordance with the convention that the first transmit frame in a TDMA lags the first receive frame by an offset of 3 (thus ordinary single slot GSM can be regarded as a particular case in which only slot 1 of transmit and receive is used).

The remaining figures (save for the state transition diagrams) conform to the illustration of figure 1 but the slot numbering has been removed for extra clarity. The shaded slots are those allocated for the particular states and the arrowed inserts e.g. numerals 41 and 42 of figure 4 indicate the applicable measurement and turnaround

intervals and number of slots allocated for these intervals. The hashed slots e.g. numeral 43 of figure 4 indicate reception of a valid USF. As mentioned above, constraints are imposed by the need to allow measurement and turnaround 5 slots and the prescript for these in 05.02 Annex B limits dynamic allocation as shown in table 1 for the example of multislot class 12.

Table 1

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Multislot class	Maximum number of slots			Minimum number of slots			
	Rx	Tx	Sum	T _{ta}	T _{tb}	T _{ra}	T _{rb}
12	4	4	5	2	1	2	1

T_{ta} is the time needed for the MS to perform adjacent cell signal level measurement and get ready to transmit.

T_{tb} is the time needed for the MS to get ready to transmit

15 T_{ra} is the time needed for the MS to perform adjacent cell signal level measurement and get ready to receive.

T_{rb} is the time needed for the MS to get ready to receive

It should be noted that in practice the times T_{ta} and T_{tb} may be reduced by a fraction of a slot due to timing

20 advance.

The measurement period for extended dynamic allocation is specified (05.02 6.4.2.2) as T_{ra}. That is to say that

all neighbour measurements are taken just before the first receive slot and not before the transmit slot.

If there are m timeslots allocated for reception and n timeslots allocated for transmission, then there must be
5 Min(m,n) reception and transmission timeslots with the same timeslot number.

With reference to figure 2, an example of a 3 slot allocation, annotated R3T0->R3T2, is shown with no uplink slot allocated initially. A valid USF received on Rx slot
10 2 allows 2 TX slots on the next uplink frame. The annotation -> indicates a change of state.

The figures 3 to 5 show steady state extended dynamic allocations for 2 PDCH according to the annotations and the measurement and turnaround intervals are marked. Figure 6
15 is a state transition diagram for 2 PDCH extended dynamic allocations and shows all of the allowed states.

Figures 7 through to 11 show the slot positions and applicable measurement and turnaround intervals for the transitions of figure 6.

20 Steady state 3 PDCH extended dynamic allocations are shown in figures 12 to 15. The state transitions for 3PDCH are shown in figure 16 and the corresponding slot positions and measurement and turnaround intervals in figures 17 to 25. It can be seen that for all of the illustrations no
25 impediment to slot allocation arises from the application of the measurement and turnaround intervals.

With 4 slot extended dynamic allocations, however conflicts occur and the prescribed conditions do not permit implementation beyond the steady state R4T0 case illustrated in figure 26. This is because the constraint 5 $T_{ra}=2$ for neighbour cell measurement cannot be applied since Tx slot 4 is always used, leaving only a single slot turnaround time before Rx slot 1. Examples of allowed and prohibited 4 slot extended dynamic allocations in accordance with the prior art are shown in figures 26 to 30. 10 These indicate steady states and the four receive slots and no transmit slot R4T0 state of figure 26 is allowed. The allocations prohibited are overlaid by a "no entry" logo (e.g. numeral 301 of figure 30) in the illustrations of figure 27, R4T1, fig 28, R3T2, fig 29 R2T3 and fig 30 R1T4. 15 It can be seen that these prohibitions arise because of the limitation of one slot allowed for the measurement and preparation T_{ra} (the time needed to measure and then prepare for transmission).

In accordance with the invention there is re-20 allocation of measurement and recovery periods to increase the availability of uplink resources when uplink resources are otherwise constrained by prescribed allocations.

Application of the method in accordance with the invention provides for the previously prohibited 25 allocations of figures 27 to 30 to be admitted as shown in figures 32 to 35. If N slots are allocated, and $N+T_{ra}+3 \leq 8$ (number of slots in a frame), then T_{ra} is used as the

measurement interval otherwise if $N+T_{ra}+3 > 8$
.....(XX),

then T_{ta} is used as the measurement interval;

where

5 <= less than or equal to

> greater than

T_{ta} is the time needed to measure and then prepare for transmission

Application of the method to the steady state R4T1 is
10 shown in figure 32,

With the number of PDCH's allocated $N=4$, the measurement and preparation interval $T_{ra} = 2$, $N+T_{ra}+3>8$ ($4 +2+3 = 9$)

therefore T_{ta} is used as the measurement interval. The impediment to operation shown in figure 27 is therefore removed by application of the method as illustrated in figure 32.

This procedure is implemented in the mobile station which when using the extended dynamic allocation method, and on receiving an allocation of PDCH numbering ' N ', must perform the comparison above in order to time the radio link measurement procedure correctly.

The procedure performed by the network equipment is that when allocating a number of PDCHs ' N ', it recognises that when N satisfies the condition (XX) above it must take into account the capability of the mobile station to perform measurements using T_{ta} and provided that:

$N+T_{rb}+3 \leq 8$, is capable of allocating such a number of PDCHs.

The method may be applied successfully to the remaining steady states shown in figures 33, 34 and 35. Furthermore the method is effective for all of the 4 slot state transitions shown in the state transition diagram figure 6. Illustrations of the 4 slot state transitions are given in figures 37 through to 50.